RESEARCH PLAN PROPOSAL

The Social life of Marwar State in the Eighteenth century

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Relevance of Study

Rajasthan was ruled by the Rajputs during the medieval period but their power faced a challenge due to the Turkish invasions in the twelfth century and thereafter by the arrival of the Mughals in the 16th century and their decline in the Eighteenth century. These years were marked by the entry of Islam and its recognition as the religion at the centre. This had its influence on the Hindu society, which was susceptible to newer challenges to sustain its identity. The period of eighteenth century has been considered as a dark period in the history of India as it witnessed the fall of the Mughals, and led to the anarchical situation in which the Indian powers tried to make the most of the situation and tried to break free from the central control. The Marathas, at this time emerged as the formidable power which tried to extend its sway on the central power and fill in the power vacuum. Rajput rulers too, took advantage of the deteriorating Mughal power and tried to extend their boundaries .Mutual rivalry among them led to internecine fights and struggles. Rajasthan in period saw the entry of the Marathas as the hired soldiers and mercenary bands assisting the rulers in the reestablishment and consolidation of their power in Rajputana in lieu of money. Thus Maratha inroads became the order of the day, which led to the anarchy and chaos in the Rajput states, hampering its progress and growth. Thus Historians such as Jadunath Sarkar, Ishwari Prasad and Tara Chand have considered this period as a dark phase in the history of Rajputana. On the other hand, historians such as K.N. Panikkar and Muzaffar Alam have considered this period as a period of cultural effervescence, in which the Rajput states witnesses' great cultural growth and also saw the development of art, architecture and literature.

Ruled by the Rathore Dynasty, the ruler of Marwar, Mota Raja Udai Singh had accepted Mughal sovereignity after the Nagaur Durbar of Akbar, though Chandrasen continued to provide resistance to Akbar till his death in1581.Mota raja and his successors contributed significantly to the consolidation of the Mughal Empire during the reign of Akbar, Jahangir and Shahjahan. Marwar witnessed turbulence since the time of Jaswant Singh's death and had faced hard times in the thirty year war (1679-1709) and thereafter. This was a period of great turmoil in Rajputana as not only Marwar but also Mewar and Jaipur got together to fight off the Mughals. The eighteenth century Marwar was ruled by Maharaja Ajit singh, Abhay Singh, Ram Singh, Bakhat Singh and Vijay Singh etc and was very much affected by the recurrent Maratha invasions. This chaos and the turmoil affected the life of the people of

Marwar. It is against this background that I would be taking up my research on the Social life in the Eighteenth century Marwar. 18th century.

Marwar in the Eighteenth Century is an interesting period of study against the background that has been discussed above. Not much work has been done in the Social life of Marwar in the 18th Century. I will be looking into structure of the society, religion, culture, social life of women and slavery, which were all an important part of the social life of Marwar.

The position of women is a reflection of the level of civilization achieved by any society. The better the status the more civilized the society is. Thus there need to study and understand the role of women in society also along with various social restrictions imposed upon her time to time. I will be looking into the society of Marwar and study its culture and understand the social dynamics that impact the society. In this process I will study the various social institutions like widow remarriage, *purdah*, marriage, family and culture which will help me in understanding diverse social practices. Therefore I shall take up the study of the society of Marwar to find out more about social, religion and cultural life of Marwar in the 18th century.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Rajasthan is the largest state in India which is located in the western part of India consisting of cities like Jaipur (Amer), Jodhpur (Marwar), Udaipur (Mewar), Bikaner, Jaisalmer, Kota, Ajmer etc. One of the cities among these is Jodhpur city (Marwar) which is known as the Blue city. Formerly the capital of Marwar,this state has contributed significantly to the History of Rajasthan. The geography and boundaries of Marwar have been beautifully described by Jagdish Gehlot, in Marwar Rajya ka Itihas. 'Marwar is a city located in the western part of Rajasthan it was established in 1226 earlier its capital was Mandor but later on in 1450 Rao Jodha shifted the capital to Jodhpur which is till now the capital of Marwar'.

Dr. G.N. Sharma in his work Rajasthan State Gazetteer Volume II informs us about the foundation of Marwar in these words "The foundation of the Rathore dynasty was laid by Siha, who emigrated to Pali in the middle of the 13th century. He fought wars against the neighbouring tribes of Mirs and Minas and died while resisting a Turkish invasion about 1273. It was Rao Chunda (1384-1428) of this dynasty, who rose into prominence by establishing his power at Mandore. The history of Rathores of Marwar become clearer from the time of Jodha (1438-1489), he captured Mandore and brought a large part of Marwar under his control. In order to consolidate his power, Jodha laid the foundation of the new fort and town in 1459 and named it Jodhpur, after his own name." Marwar is known by different names as described by G. H. Ojha in his book 'Jodhpur Rajya ka Itihas' has called it as *Maru*, *Marusthal*, *Marusthali*, *Marav*, *Marudesh*, and *Marukantaar* which means desert or waterless state (*nirjaldesh*). He explains that the word 'war' in Marwar means 'protector' therefore word Marwar means 'protected with desert'.

There are many events and stories which came to light through the works of some great historians who wrote about the royalty, battles among the rulers of Rajasthan, battles with foreign invaders like Afghans, Mughals, Marathas and the British. They have also written about the nobility, the political scenario during different periods of history and a lot of work has been done on the rulers, their courts, and life style but not much work has been done on the social life of this region.

While studying the social life of any community, family is very important. It is a standard unit and is reflective of cultural development at all levels. Family in 18th century Marwar was

a standard joint family which included 5-7 generations living together with father as the head and with a patriarchal setup followed in the traditional Hindu society. Family in Marwar as elsewhere has special economic importance where all the members jointly owned the lands and worked together on the farms. In towns they worked together in following: the crafts, trade and commerce. A family have been a centre of all activities such as celebrations of festivals, *sanskars* and pursuance of all activities of life. Many customs were associated with the family life such as births, marriage and death as well as the growth of all individuals concerned. There customs and traditions which were preserved by the families were observed by all sections of the society with minor changes in rituals and rights. The Hindu society consisted of many castes that lived in Marwar in the 18^{th} century. There were certain changes in customs and traditions that are followed by the members of different castes at the time of birth, marriage and death.

The court of rulers and the *Zenani Deorhi* were the mirrors of the society. The royal traditions percolated down to the society and mirrored the social life of that period. The type of marriages such as *savarna* marriage, inter caste marriages and inter-religion marriages can be seen as well as polygamy, monogamy, widowhood, prostitution etc are some of the social institutions that formed an important part of the social life. The means of amusement, leisure time activities are an important part of the social life of any person rich or poor.

The customs form an interesting part and the contemporary records sculpted etc., provide a lot of information about the dressing pattern, occupation, food habits of people. Apart from the many ceremonies that are connected with life, there were several festivals that are observed distinctly by the people irrespective of their social status. These festivals had mythological or historical origin and were spread over the year which provided a lot of occasions to celebrate and enjoy life. These celebrations formed an important part of social interaction and enjoyment to all class of people. These festivals are an inherent part of the cultural life, a study of which will enable to understand the society of Marwar with greater depth. Thus despite of a period of turmoil that the state had to face due to wars, extreme dry conditions like draught, failure of crops, invasions and plunder by Marathas, these occasions provided enthusiastic and gaiety during this period.

One can also witness the growth of composite culture during this period. A study of religious life of Marwar is important to understand the beliefs about sacred things and the rights addressed to them. They are composed of myths, worships, teachings, pilgrimages,

superstitions and faith above all. A mix of all these factors will portray the religious life of Marwar in the 18th century.

Social life and culture in the eighteenth century were marked by stagnation and dependence on the past. Though a certain broad cultural unity can be seen that had developed over the centuries, but a diversity of culture and social patterns among the people of different religion, tribe, language and castes can be seen all over the region. The social life and culture of the upper classes, that formed a tiny minority of the total population, was quite diverse from the life and culture of the lower classes of the society.

Caste was the central feature of the social life of the Hindus in Marwar. It often split the Hindus of the same village or region into many social groups with their distinct way of life. Apart from the four varnas, Hindus were divided into several castes (jatis) and fixed their place in the social hierarchy. The higher castes, enjoyed social esteem and privileges. Caste rules were extremely rigid. Inter-caste marriages were not allowed. There were limitations on inter-dining among people of different castes. Sometimes, persons belonging to the higher castes would not take partake food touched by the lower castes people. The choice of profession was often determined by the Castes, though there were exceptions to the rule. Caste regulations were strictly imposed by the caste councils and panchayats and chiefs through fines, penances (prayaschitya) and ousting/boycott (expulsion) from the caste.

The family life in eighteenth-century Marwar, as elsewhere in Rajasthan and India was primarily patriarchal in nature .The Head of the family was the senior most male member of the family, who ruled it like a king governs his kingdom. The right of inheritance was reserved by the males. Women, on the other hand were subservient to the males in the family. They enjoyed respect as mothers and wives, and had an important role in the family. Though they had to undergo many threats to their existence and bear hardships due to the prevalence of many social customs in the period under study, such as Female Infanticide, deplorable conditions of the widows, *Sati*, Polygamy and *Purdah* etc, which undermined their status in the society. But the women of the Ruling families and the privileged class enjoyed certain freedom and autonomy of their own .While women of the higher classes did not work outside their homes, the women in the lower strata enjoyed more liberty of working in the fields and outside their homes to augment the income of their family.

The marriages were arranged by the heads of the families. Polygamy was prevalent in the society. Rulers and men of affluence were permitted to have more than one wife. Women, on the other hand were expected to marry only once in her lifetime. However, we come across *Naata* type of marriages among certain castes of Marwar. There was a custom of child marriage, wherein the children were married at a very young age by the parents of the boy

and Girl. Among the higher classes, heavy expenses were incurred on marriages of the boys and girls as well as the custom of giving dowry to the bride. However in some castes the tradition of Bride price prevailed too as in the case of Porwals in Marwar. This sometimes emerged as a social evil too.

Many social evils can be associated with eighteenth-century pan India scenario, the first was the custom of sati and the deplorable condition of the widows. Eighteenth-century Marwar witnessed many *Satis* and a number of sati memorials can still be seen in the Mehrangarh Fort in Jodhpur. It was prevalent among the families of rulers, chiefs, and also among the Charan and zamindars. High caste widows could not remarry, though in some castes of Marwar widow remarriage was quite common. But the general lot of the Hindu widow was quite deplorable. There were many restrictions on her food, clothes, and movements, etc. Expected to relinquish a life of all pleasures she was expected to serve selflessly the members of her husband's family until she died.

My first chapter will be **the Geographical and Historical background of Marwar State**. It will talk about Rajasthan and the foundation of Marwar state in 1226 and the shifting of its capital to Jodhpur in 1450, the history of ruling dynasty in Marwar and an overview of the status of women in Rajasthan that what were the common problems faced by the women of Rajasthan. How they had a lower position in the patriarchal society and how they were living with those circumstances. After that I will be focussing my topic on Marwar state of Rajasthan and the common women in this area. How were their living conditions, family life and the social structure which bounded them with restrictions and what were the causes of their deteriorated conditions at home as well as in society. It will also focus on how 18th century was so important, as there were so many social and political changes going on in this period and change in ruling powers and declining of the great Mughal power after such great rule. All these changing situation and the changing condition of women in that will help us understand the actual status of women, their lives which will enlighten us with the overall view of 18th century in which earlier a main part of the society was almost neglected.

My second chapter will be **structure of Society in Marwar**. This will be including the caste structure, hierarchical structure and untouchability in Marwar, the status of people of different castes, inter caste relations etc. Occupation and urban and rural life will be included. The customs form an interesting part and the contemporary records sculpted etc. provide a lot of information about the dressing pattern, occupation, food habits of people. Apart from the many ceremonies that are connected with life, there were several festivals that are observed

distinctly by the people irrespective of their social status. This will all be included in this chapter.

My third chapter will be related to **the religious and cultural life of Marwar**. This will include different religious beliefs and faiths of people in Marwar, their various superstitions which were the part of people's life in Marwar. The cultural life will include various fairs and festivals which the people use to celebrate in 18th century Marwar. How the religious beliefs and customs of the royal court had an influence on the common people will be noted.

My fourth chapter will be concerned about **Zenani Deorhi and its impact on the Socail and Cultural life of Marwar.** This will include the prevalence of female infanticide in different castes in Marwar during 18th century. A book by Sambhodh Goswami titled 'Female Infanticide and Child Marriage' gives a clear knowledge about the reasons of why girl child were killed in Rajasthan and he also talked about Marwar region. Reasons such as huge amount of money spent in marriage of a daughter was acceptable by some families and the huge demands made by the *charans* and *bhats* during marriage were the reasons for female infanticide in Marwar region. The custom of sati was also an important issue in Marwar as the royal women use to burn herself alive with the body of her dead husband; this was a tradition in upper caste women only. But how this custom of upper caste affected the lives of other women living in the *Zenani Deorhi* and also among the women of other caste who were not living in zenana will be interesting to know. These were the customs and practices which gives a clear understanding about the condition and status of women in Marwar during 18th century.

My fifth chapter will be **Social life of Women in Marwar.** This will be including the patriarchal structure in society during 18th century Marwar, condition of women, purdah system and various customs which show the status of women in society.

My sixth chapter will be **Domestic Hereditary System (*Daroga* System) in Marwar**. This will be including the concept of slavery in Marwar and the women who were abducted and sold in the royal palaces. They use to live there as *daroga-darogis* and serve the Maharaja and their Ranis for their entire lives. They were also sent in dowry with the daughter during marriage

Conclusion

My work "The Social life in the Eighteenth century Marwar", I will be including an introduction of Marwar, and the ruling power during that time. The society during 18th century, various castes in marwar and their customs and practices prevalent in Marwar and various religions and people celebrating different festivals and occations. The occupations of people in marwar and their eatig and living habits will be included in my work. I will try and cover the important aspect of women life through which her actual position in society will be shown. The history of Rajasthan has until now been studied from the male perspective. Women have always been in the background and not much credit has been given to them in history. However, through this work I will try and find out what was the social structure of women of different castes and how the lives and traditions of royalty affected the lives and status of other women living with the ranis as well as women of lower castes outside the. The social evils in the society and social mindset which deteriorated the condition of women in medieval period will be part of my work. The crimes against women in the society will be listed such as female infanticide and *sati pratha* and how polygamy affected the lives of women in the royal harem. Various cases of slavery and the custom of *daroga-darogi*, abduction for slavery, and their living conditions etc which were occurring in 18th century in Marwar will be taken into consideration. What were the rights and privileges given to women during that time and on the other hand restrictions put on them. How royal life style worked as a mirror for the common women in Marwar and how their lives changed with this in 18th century will be the focus of my study.

Chapter 3

Review of Literature

Ojha, Rayabahadur Gaurishankar Hirachandra. (1936) Jodhpur Rajya Ka Itihas

The book by Dr. Ojha clearly described the geographical conditions of Marwar region. Along with the places, areas, and boundaries of Marwar he also wrote about all the mountain ranges, rivers, lakes and water bodies in his work. After giving details about the jungles, agricultural produce, fruits, birds and animals he also gives a brief knowledge about the wild animals and birds in his book. He has written about the social life of people in Marwar to explain this he has given a brief account of information about the castes, cultures, clothes, jewellery, eating habits and occupation of people living in Marwar. Information of education, hospitals, post office system, and judicial system is all included in this book. The author not only wrote about the geographical and social environment of Marwar during that time but also gives information about the ruling dynasties which rules Marwar at different periods of time and also about the Chauhan dynasty which is the royal family of Marwar region till no w. This book provide a great deal of knowledge for history and culture of Rajasthan specially Marwar region in a detailed form and about its enduring past including almost every aspect of society.

Joshi, Varsha. (1995) Polygamy and Purdah Women and Society among Rajputs..

This work examines the institution of polygamy and *Purdah* in the Rajput ruling houses of Rajasthan from the thirteenth to the early nineteenth centuries. The aim is to study the role of women in the making of the political, social and cultural history of Rajasthan. It describes how patriarchal system deteriorated the position of women in society but also that in some cases women were also warriors and administrators. The social and cultural contribution of women in public life in described here. This will help me in understanding the status of Rajputs women in Polygamy, the challenging situations faced by them and how it was different from the lives of common women who were away from this system of polygamy.

Dr. Jawalia. Brij Mohan. (2004) Socio-Economic Conditions in Rajasthan.

The author writes about the socio- economic history of Rajasthan from later half of 17th century till first half of 18th century. This book includes the political background of Rajasthan and the social and economic condition of common people. It includes the verna system, various superstitions, the system of prostitution, polygamy and system of child marriage in different castes. This will help me in understanding the condition of common women in Rajasthan to form a general view and connecting it with the situation in Marwar during 18th century. It will give knowledge about the various situations during 18th century which women were living in. The custom of old age marriage and sati was also seen in the castes other than the Rajputs which will be taken into consideration and add to the knowledge.

Dr. Naravane, M.S. (1999) The Rajputs of Rajputana.

This book gives a general introduction about the geography of Rajputana in its first chapter and talked about the origin of Rajputs and different clans of Rajputs. The social customs and rituals of Rajasthan are written in brief. It includes description of Rajput women, the system of marriage among Rajputs and the institution of polygamy, concubinage and slavery. The system of widow remarriage, *purdah* system among Rajputs and female infanticide and the concept of sati in Rajasthan will all help me in understanding the condition of royal women and in relation with that the women of other castes related to these systems. Generally it gives information about three divisions in the concubines in Rajasthan, the efforts will be to see if similar condition prevailed in Marwar.

Banerjee, Anil Chandra. (1983) Aspects of Rajput State and Society.

The book Aspects of Rajput State and Society describes about the political and social institutions of the Rajputs. It talks about various practices and social customs prevalent in medieval Rajputana under the Rajputs such as polygamy, sati and female infanticide which deteriorated the position of women in society. This will help in my study by understanding these social practices rampant in Marwar and the condition of Rajputs after the decline of Mughals and the advent of new power that was the Marathas in the state.

Gaur, Meena. (1989) Sati and Social Reforms in India.

The book by Meena Gaur describes about the status of women in medieval society in the state of Rajputana. The author talks about various customs and practices prevalent in Rajputana such as sati, witchcraft and female infanticide and the system of slavery and the various classes in slavery such as Daroga, Chakar, Chela, Gola, Goli etc and their conditions in society. How these social practices had effect on the lives of people in society.

Panagariya, B.L., Pahariya, N.C. (1993) Political, Socio-Economic and Cultural History of Rajasthan (Earliest times to 1947.

The book is a contribution in the political, social, economic and cultural history of Rajputana. The author writes about the Rajputana state, its geographical setting, culture and the emergence of new communities. The origin of the Rajputs as the new power and how their traditions and cultures led to the changes in society are described in this work. The condition of women in Rajputana and the status of royal women in state and their customs and system of *Purdah* to seclude them are describes. The custom of polygamy and sati are described which will help in knowing the situation of women in Rajputana during the 18th century. Through all these subjects, information about the situations in Marwar will also be known.

Dr. Sharma, G.N. Social Life in Medieval Rajasthan (1500-1800)

This book emphasise on the social organisations and life of medieval Rajasthan. The marriage customs, the concept of polygamy and sati among the Rajputs gives a clear picture of the social structure in Rajasthan. This will help me in understanding the general condition of royal women and other women living in *janana deorhi* and getting an idea of similar things happening in Marwar state during that time. The tradition of concubinage in royal harem all over Rajasthan and the example of polygamy in Marwar as Maharaja Abhaya Singh 1724-1745 A.D. of Jodhpur had twelve wives give us the understanding that there were similar cases in Marwar state during 18th century.

Singh, Chandramani. (2015)Women of Rajasthan.

This book by Chandramani Singh is an excellent work on the role played by women in society. He has taken into consideration the women in Rajashan and their social and political role between1200-1900). It will help me in understanding the social status of women in

Rajasthan and also in Marwar as there are various examples of Rajput women and also the non Rajput women in Marwar during 18th century. The author talks about the contribution of Marwar women in construction of various *bavadis* and lakes. I came through some examples of women who were the concubines of the rulers and other ladies who contributed in construction of *bavadis* and wells. The *paswan* of Maharaja Vijay Singh (1753-93) Gulab Rai constructed the Gulab Sagar Lake. This tells us the status of women, not only the Rajput women but also other women living in Zenani Deorhi in Marwar. Their religious life is seen by this and their contributions in developing Marwar socially and economically.

Dr. Sharma Vasumati, 2012, Rathore Rajvansha k Riti Riwaj (1600-1850)

This book by Mrs. Vasumati Sharma deals with all the religious rituals of the Royal family of Rathore of Marwar region .All the rituals and ceremonies celebrated by the ruling family related to birth, marriage, death during the years 1600-1850. This book gives detailed information regarding all the festivals and religious beliefs and the way in which they were celebrated during that time. It not only gives the proper details about how the customs and practices were done among the Rathores but also gives knowledge about the social, economic and cultural status of Marwar region during that time. The method of performing certain rights and customs and information about the development in Art and literature is described beautifully in this work, which throw a good deal of light on social life of the Rajputs during that period.

Dave R.K., (1984), Society and Culture of Marwar

This book deals with society and culture of Marwar in its different dimensions during the period 1600 A.D. to 1900 A.D. It includes social organisation, social life and customs, economic life, language and literature, education and learning, art and architecture of Marwar. First chapter deals with Varna system prevalent in Marwar during that time and their duties. Second and third chapter deals with various castes and clans and their occupation. Further the customs, rites and rituals of the Rajputs is described by the author. The impact of Mughals and British on Marwar, the changes in the system of *Bhai-Bandas* during the Mughal period to ruler and servant which strengthened the central authority in Marwar . Marriages with Hindu Royal princesses of Mughals accelerated the process of fusion. British influence resulted in the adaption of sources of income of the state by abolition of custom and transit duties. British Socio-economic development during their period like abolition of social

evils, construction of modern roads and railways, means of communication including post and telegraph, education through schools and colleges brought a new era in the history of Marwar. Thus this book is a great work to know the actual condition of Marwar during the Mughals and then with the British.

Shyamaldas(1886), Veer Vinod (History of Mewar)

Veer Vinod is a most important literary source to know the history of Rajasthan in general and Mewar in particular. It is written by Shyamaldas in Urdu-mixed Hindi language. It not only talk about the rulers of Rajasthan and their bravery but also give us a survey of Europe, north and south America and also describe about the events which happened outside the Indian subcontinent which effected the history of Rajasthan.

Lieut. Tod James, (1920) Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan

The book Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan by James Tod has 3 volumes. The first volume describes about the geography of Rajasthan, about the boundaries and different states of Rajasthan. Description about the hills and rivers is given in a detailed manner. Other chapters give the knowledge about different tribes and clans of Rajputs which resides in Rajasthan, he talked about the solar and lunar lines and about the feudal system prevalent in Rajasthan during that period, the Mughal relations with the Rajputs, we get to know about the conflicts and strategies of Rajputs with the Mughals. It also tells the history of Mewar and the Maratha attacks in Mewar.

Chapter 4

Methodology

Primary Sources: - Unpublished documents preserved in

Rajasthan State Archive, Bikaner and regional centres

All the Bahis related to Marwar

Maharaja Man Singh Pustak Prakash, Jodhpur

- Byava Bahis(V.S. 1765-1796)
- Hat Bahis (V.S. 1826-1940)
- Sanad Parwana Bahi
- Jodhpur Bahiyat
- Dastri records

Choupansini Shodh Sasthan, Jodhpur

Oriental research institutes located in different cities

Private Museums etc.

Universities libraries

Secondary Sources: - Published works (details in bibliography)

Books

Journals

Articles

E-Books

Chapter 5

Chapter Scheme

1. The Geographical and Historical background of Marwar State

2. Structure of Society in Marwar

3. The religious and cultural life of Marwar

4. Zenani Deorhi and its impact on the Socail and Cultural life of Marwar

5. Social life of Women in Marwar

6. Domestic Hereditary (Daroga System) in Marwar

7. Conclusion

Chapter 6

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